

Former Ohio State Tight End Cade Stover Defends Blocking Abilities At NFL Combine



Despite leaving Ohio State as one of the more accomplished tight ends in program history — ranking third all-time at his position in both career receiving yards (1,058) and receptions (82) — many NFL Draft experts believe the former Buckeye Cade Stover’s game is still an unfinished product.

These qualms are mostly pertaining to the two-time captain’s run-and-pass blocking abilities, an aspect of his game that had been circled as an area of weakness for Stover throughout, and even after, his Buckeye career. Pro Football Focus gave him a run-and-pass blocking grade of 54.4 and 68.6 last season, which ranked 41st and 19th out of 69 tight ends that played at least 300 snaps in 2023.

Speaking with the media at the NFL Combine on Thursday, Stover took exception to these criticisms, saying that both him and his team’s ability to block last season was far better than the overall public perception.

“I’m here to tell you old PFF doesn’t know my scheme,” Stover said. “They don’t know what the hell I’m doing out there. Yeah, that seems to be a common theme going on here.”

“The (perception that we) struggle blocking, I think it’s a misconception,” he added. “I can think of a million blocks (we made). That’s life. That’s the way it goes. I’m always giving 100 percent effort, always full tilt, full time.”

Stover, who received praise last season from head coach Ryan Day and tight ends coach Keenan Bailey for improving his overall blocking, specifically pointed to criticisms that he has “missed” a number of blocks in his Ohio State career. The Mansfield, Ohio, native and farmer said that those occasional misses stem from his aggressive style of play when it comes to blocking, a mentality that he admitted caused him some problems for him last year, but was shared among both staff and players in the program last season.

“If you’re afraid to miss, you’re not going to get anything done,” he said. “You’re going to play passive. We were OK with that (occasional miss).”

“(If) you missed (a block) when you’re trying to head-hunt somebody, that’s trouble. I struggle with that sometimes. I get my head out in front of my shoulder sometimes like I’m still playing defense rather than just making a solid block.”

Regardless of his inadequacies in blocking, Stover is still slated to be selected in this year’s NFL Draft, with NFLMockDraftDatabase.com projecting him to go in the fourth round, with his overall player ranking coming in at No. 105. But for Stover, his focus isn’t on these projections, but rather on the great potential that he knows he can reach in the NFL.

“I don’t think you can measure what’s inside of me,” Stover said “I don’t think you can measure the kind of person I am. I don’t think you can measure how good of a football player (I’ll become). I’m just scratching the surface.”